

Cyclosporiasis

(*Cyclospora cayetanensis*)

Disease Fact Sheet Series

What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is an illness caused by an infection with a microscopic one-celled parasite named *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. The first known human cases of cyclosporiasis were reported in 1979.

Where is *Cyclospora* found?

Cyclospora is commonly found in many developing countries. It occurs less frequently in the U.S.

Who gets cyclosporiasis?

Persons of all ages are at risk for infection with *Cyclospora*, especially those in developing countries. Eating fruits or vegetables from those countries can also cause infection if the food is not properly washed before eating.

How is *Cyclospora* spread?

Cyclospora is spread by eating foods or drinking water contaminated with feces. *Cyclospora* is not spread directly from person-to-person because when the parasite is passed from the body it needs time to develop in soil or some other warm, moist external environment before it can infect another person.

What are the symptoms of cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis usually causes a prolonged watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, increased gas, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, muscle aches, and low-grade fever. Some infected persons may have few or no symptoms.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear about one week after eating or drinking food or drink contaminated with feces.

(Over)

How is cyclosporiasis diagnosed?

Cyclosporiasis is diagnosed in the laboratory by examining stool samples using special stains. A single negative test does not definitively rule out the possibility of infection; two or three more specimens may be required for diagnosis of cyclosporiasis.

Can cyclosporiasis be treated?

Patients with cyclosporiasis can be effectively treated with antibiotics. In addition, infected persons with diarrhea should rest and drink plenty of fluids.

How can cyclosporiasis be prevented?

Avoiding food or water that may be contaminated with feces may help prevent cyclosporiasis. When traveling to developing countries, persons should not to eat foods such as fruits or vegetables that are not baked, boiled or peeled and avoid drinking untreated surface water.